



Edward Said

Author
and Activist

Palestinian-American Activist Edward Said's Ongoing Impact

Edward Said's lifework as an author and peace advocate shows no signs of fading.

A writer of books that affected Middle East scholarship, Said continues to inspire people, through his legacy, since his death in 2003. A testament to Said is a series of annual lectures held in his name at Columbia University and Princeton University that feature world-renowned professors.

"Said's knowledge, wit and passion for truth will continue to inspire peace activists and genuine scholars," Tanweer Akram, an economist with Moody's Corporation, wrote shortly after Said's death. "He embodied the best values of Western and Arab civilizations. He used his knowledge for seeking justice."

Born in Jerusalem in 1935, Said lived in Cairo and Jerusalem as a

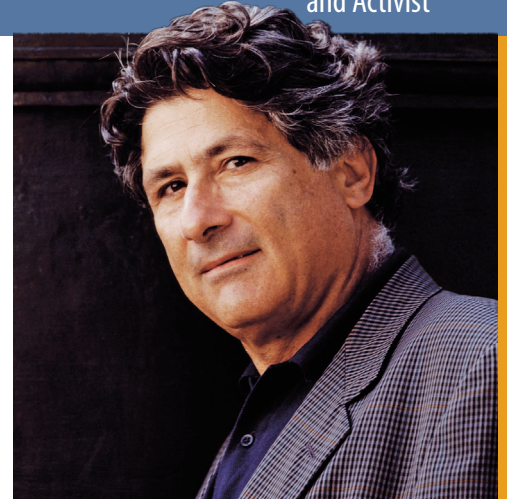
young man and attended boarding school in Massachusetts in 1951. In 1963, Said began teaching at Columbia University; he earned a doctorate in English literature from Harvard University in 1964.

With Arabic used at home and English at school, Said was exposed to two worlds, sparking curiosity about how people view cultures. This interest manifested in his writings on perceptions of the Arab world, especially with his groundbreaking work *Orientalism*, published in 1978.

Orientalism critically examines how Western scholars and authors describe non-Western cultures. The book has influenced how Arab studies are taught in universities around the world and has sparked decades of debate among academics.

Through his writings and activism, Said also brought the complexities of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process to the forefront of discussion.

Said authored several books on Israeli and Palestinian issues, including *The Question of Palestine*, *The Politics of Dispossession* and *The End of the Peace Process*. He also wrote numerous articles on the peace process and was a regular



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speaker on the subject, educating Americans and people around the world.

As an advocate of a two-state solution, Said wrote on the legitimacy of Jewish and Palestinian claims to the land. In his 1979 article "Zionism from the Standpoint of its Victims," Said presented arguments supporting the establishment of Israel and for a Palestinian state.

An accomplished pianist, Said used his love of music to forge peace between Israelis and Palestinians. Working with Israeli-Argentine conductor Daniel Barenboim, Said helped establish the West-Eastern Divan, a youth orchestra. Based in Spain, the orchestra has members who come from Arab countries, Iran and Israel "to enable intercultural dialogue and to promote the experience of collaborating on a matter of common interest," according to the organization.

Edward Said during an interview in July 1998. Ruby Washington/The New York Times/Redux



Prominent Arab Americans Featured in This Series



Abdu



Ahmed



El-Baz



Gaida



Akkad



DeBakey



Hayek



Kasem



Gibran



Haiek



Masry



McAuliffe



Khaled



Khannouchi



Said



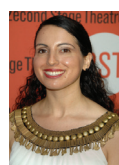
Salama



Shihab Nye



Rihani



Shamieh



Zerhouni



Zewail



Tlaib

Rashid Abdu, Physician

Ahmed Ahmed, Comedian

Moustapha Akkad, Film Director

Michael DeBakey, Heart Surgeon

Farouk El-Baz, Geologist

Gaida, Singer

Kahlil Gibran, Artist and Poet

Joseph Haiek, Publisher

Salma Hayek, Actress

Casey Kasem, Radio Broadcaster

DJ Khaled, Rap Music Artist

Khalid Khannouchi, Marathon Runner

Ferial Masry, Community Activist

Christa McAuliffe, Teacher in Space

Naomi Shihab Nye, Author

Ameen Rihani, Poet

Edward Said, Author and Activist

Kareem Salama, Singer

Betty Shamieh, Playwright

Rashida Tlaib, Politician

Elias Zerhouni, Medical Vanguard

Ahmed Zewail, Chemist